

Portable Carrying Devices

This Application claims the benefit under 35 USC 119 (e) of previously file provisional application number 60/279,984 filed March 29, 2001. This application also claims the benefit under 35 USC 119 of Philippine patent application number 000525 2-2000 filed on December 5, 2000 with the Intellectual Property Office of the Philippines.

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

The present invention relates to devices for carrying objects. More particularly it relates to various portable devices that can be easily deployed for the hand carrying of various sundry items.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

Quite often when a person is traveling for personal or business reasons they need to carry extra items with them to or from their destination. If traveling for personal reasons they may need to carry gifts for the people they may be visiting on their trip or gifts for friends and family on their return. If traveling for business they may be carrying products for sale or samples of products for sale. Often the item may be of an odd size or shape or simply bulky. Thus, they have need for some type of device or method that is both durable yet economical for carrying the item.

Often the only solution is to use cardboard boxes wrapped with string or tape as a temporary means or device for carrying the objects. While this may be an economical and simple way for transporting such items the packaging is not durable and subject to tearing and ripping. Cardboard boxes bags and other types of ad hoc packaging generally

are bulky and difficult to carry or handle since they lack appropriate handles or other devices to lift and carry them. Temporary packaging such as cardboard boxes with tape and string also looks unsightly. Additionally, when using public means of transportation such as airlines, railroads, ships etc. temporary packaging such as cardboard boxes or similar make shift packaging may not meet regulations or standard guidelines and thus may not be allowed on the means for public transport on common carriers.

Standard suitcases, valises and other types of specially made personal carrying devices represent an improvement over use of cardboard boxes bags or the like. The standard suitcase provides a protected carrying compartment with stiffened sides often made of cardboard or plastic like material. However, these are usually permanently secured within the walls of the suitcase or valise. Additionally, most if not all suitcases or valises are designed to hold clothing or similar personal items and tend to be oblong and narrow in width thus making them unsuitable to carry objects that tend to be bulky or more cubic in shape. Various common carriers have guidelines for the size of containers or cases. Airlines have approved standard sizes for containers in the shape of a cube in the range of 18x18x18 inches to 20x20x20 inches although this may vary from Airline to Airline.

There are a number of portable suitcases or valises currently available that are made of flexible material that allows the suitcase or valise be fouled up into small compact package for storage and carrying when not in use. Additionally, there are variations on this design that include one or more rigid panels that allow for the insertion of the panel into the pockets provided on the suitcase to add some rigidity when it is expanded for use. However, all of these designs tend to have a parallelepiped shape similar to the standard oblong rectangular design of suitcase and valises. The shape of these cases and often the placement of reinforcing panels limits them to what they can safely hold and

transport.

Thus, what is needed is some method and apparatus designed to securely and safely hold small to medium sized objects for personal transport. A method and apparatus that is portable and easily deployed when the need arises to carry objects that may tend to be bulky in shape or of some other odd size that will not easily fit into a standard suitcase. What is also needed is a method and apparatus that complies with requirements of common carriers, in particular airlines and at airport terminals.

SUMMARY

It is an object of the present invention to provide a reinforcible flexible bag made form flexible canvass or fabric material having rigid corners that enable the bag to stand upright at all times and thus is useful as a Balikbayan box.

It is also an object of the present invention to provide a flexible carrying case made of a durable and light material that can be compacted for storage and erected with firm sides when it is needed for use. It is also an object of the present invention to provide a carrying case that can hold bulky and odd sized objects. It is still another object of the present invention to provide a container that meets the requirements of common carriers and facilitates luggage and baggage handling and in particular for airlines an airport terminals.

It is a further object of the present invention to provide a strapping mechanism for carrying packages.

These and other objectives are achieved by providing a collapsible carrying case with: a)

six flexible sides, b) four of the sides forming a peripheral wall with two facing open ends; c) a fifth side connected to the four edges of a first open end of the peripheral wall to thereby form a closed end; d) a sixth side hingedly attached to one edge of a second open end of the peripheral wall; e) the sixth side being detachably connectable to three remaining edges of the second open end of the peripheral wall to thereby form an enclosed interior space; f) each of the six walls having a pocket to accept and securely hold a rigid panel so that when a rigid panel is inserted into each pocket on the six walls the case forms a rigid carrying case with an interior space; and g) the case also includes manually graspable member on the exterior of one of its six walls to allow the case to be thereby picked up and carried.

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BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

The invention will be better understood by an examination of the following description, together with the accompanying drawings, in which:

Fig. 1 depicts a strapping device for carrying items;

Fig. 1A. another view of the straps of Fig. 1;

Fig. 2 depicts a container made according to the present invention;

Fig. 2A. depicts a face view of a reinforcing panel;

Fig. 3 depicts a variation the container of Fig. 2 with optional reinforcing walls removed

and folded up for ease of transport will not in use;

Fig. 4 depicts the container of Fig. 2 and 3 with a package inside for transport;

5 Fig. 5 depicts another version of the container of the invention with reinforced corners;

Fig. 6 is a view of the interior of the version of the container in Fig. 5;

Fig. 7 is a view of a third variation of the container of the present invention; and

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Fig. 8 provides a view of another aspect of the third variation of the container of the present invention.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENT

1. Strapping Device for carrying boxes or similar objects.

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The first version of the invention provides a detachable strapping device to bind and provide a handle or similar apparatus to carry the package as depicted in Fig. 1. The straps 21 are secured to a box 23. The straps meet at the top 24 and are secured together and connected to a handle 25. The straps 21 can be tightened around the box with the loose ends 27. When not in use the straps can be rolled up and easily carried in a person's pocket or their luggage. A Velcro™ type of material can be used to secure the ends of the straps to each other when they are placed around a package as depicted in Fig. 1. Alternatively a buckle can be used to secure the ends of the straps together.

The straps 21 in the preferred embodiment are connected permanently where they meet

28 at the bottom of the package 23. The straps could be made of nylon, canvas or similar strong or durable material. When laid out flat as depicted in Fig. 1A the straps 21 are perpendicular to each other and meet each other at juncture 28.

2. Portable carrying container.

Fig. 2 depicts a container or carrying device 30 that can be made of a durable nylon or some similar material in a canvas weave or similar strong weave. The case could also be made of canvas. A handle 32 is formed at the top. Reinforcing sheets 34 can be inserted into pockets 36 on each of the sides of the container 30. The bottom and five other sides of the case 30 each will thus each have a reinforcing sheet 34 inserted into the pocket on each side. The pockets 36 each hold a sheet 34 securely in position. The reinforcing sheets 34 turn the container into a semi-rigid container for carrying various objects and sundry items. The reinforcing sheets 34 are thin flexible but rigid sheets of a length 34L (Fig. 2A) and width 34W. These dimensions are slightly smaller than the dimensions of the side of the case 30 that the sheet would reinforce. As noted the sheets could be made of cardboard, plastic or some similar light weight, durable and rigid material.

Since the reinforcing sheets 34 can be removed from the pockets 36 of the container, the container can be folded into a compact unit 39 as depicted in Fig. 3. Each of the rigid sheets 34 are then stacked as depicted in Fig. 3 to form the compact unit 39. This allows for ease of storage and transportation of container 30 when not in use. The rigid sheets 34 can be made of plastic, cardboard or some other similar rigid but light material. Additionally, the sheets 34 can be cut from cardboard boxes available when it comes time to use the container 30. This would allow one to fold the unit up into an even more compact unit for storing and carrying when not in use.

In a preferred embodiment the shape of case 30 as depicted in Figs. 2 and 4 is cubic in shape. The typical dimensions could be from 15 to 30 inches on a side. Such as it could be 21 inches high, 21 inches deep and 21 inches wide. However, it could be even greater or less in dimensions than 15 to 30 inches on a side. The cubic shape provides utility in that it can carry objects or items contained in cardboard boxes that tend to the cubic shape. Additionally, it can handle bulky items not easily carried in standard shaped suitcases or valises.

Since the carrying device 30 has rigid sides 34 when they are inserted into side pockets one could put items directly into the carrying device 30 without first putting the item into a box or other protective covering. However, the item to be transported can be inserted into a box 41 and placed in container 30 as depicted in Fig. 4. One of the advantages of placing the item or items to be carried in a cardboard box or some other box that is roughly the size of the interior space of container 30 when expanded for use is that the rigid panels 34 do not have to be used the box 41 provides the necessary support for the walls of the container 30. In another version of the case 30 of the present invention it could be made without the pockets for rigid panels and instead the object being carried can provide the support for the sides of the case 30. In another variation the object or objects could be placed in a cardboard box of dimensions slightly smaller than the interior carrying space of case 30 and thus, the cardboard box provides the support for the case. Naturally, the box could be made of plastic or any other suitable lightweight material.

A clear panel pocket 47 is provided on the outside of the container 30 for shipping or identification information.

Referring now to Figs. 5 and 6, which show another version of the reinforced flexible bag

50. This version of the invention is similar in shape to version depicted in Fig. 2 and 4. The version 50 depicted in Figs. 5 and 6 has reinforced corners.

The reinforced flexible bag 50 comprises a bag body 51 made preferably from flexible materials such as canvass, fabric and the like having at least one openable portion 52 provided thereon and carrying handle 53 provided on the bag body.

A transparent pocket 54 is provided on the bag body for recipient of identifiable tags and other paraphernalia. Rollers 59 (Fig. 6) may be used as leg supports attached at the bottom of its stiffened base 566 to slide the bag body to facilitate handling of thereof. It should be noted that rollers 59 could also be used with the version of the invention depicted in Figs. 2 to 4.

Referring to Fig. 6 the bag body 51 is further provided with rigidifying members 53 removably secured at predetermined locations (preferably at every corner) within the bag body to make the bag body upright at most times and protect the contents thereof from damage due to bumps during handling. The corners are thus reinforced by rigidifying members 53, which as depicted in Fig. 6 are a pair of rigid flat projections 57 that fit in to pockets in the corners of the bag or case 50. Each corner has its own set of rigidifying members 53. Once inserted into the corners they provide support for the sides of the bag and protection of the corners. These rigidifying members 57 are defined by stiffened unitary elements made preferably form plastic materials. Naturally, the

The corners are reinforced by rigid flat projections 57 (Fig. 5) that fit in to pockets in the corners of the bag or case. Once inserted into the corners they provide support for the sides of the bag and protection of the corners.

The reinforced flexible bags shown in Figs. 2 to 6 may be used as a Balikbayan box, mail bag, traveling bag and the like.

Fig. 7 provides depicts a third variation of the container of the present invention. Container 71 is made of flexible and resilient material like those depicted in Figs. 2 to 6.

This can be canvas or denim, which in a preferred embodiment would be around 14 oz weight material. Container 71 as well as the others depicted in Fig. 2 to 6 can be made of a man made material such as nylon of an appropriate weight or any other suitable man made material. In the preferred embodiment container 71 would be 18x18x18 inches to 20x20x20 inches. However, it could be made in other sizes and shapes without departing from the concepts of the present invention.

One of the unique aspects of container 71 opens at its top 72. Container 71 as depicted in Fig. 7 has a zipper that runs around three edges 72A, 72B and 72C. Zipper 74 has two zipper pulleys 74A and 74B that meet when the container is zippered closed. Pulleys 74A and 74B have eyelets 74C and 74D at their ends to allow a pad lock, not shown, to secure the case. Naturally, container 71 of the present invention can have a different closing mechanism instead of a zipper and still be practiced.

Container 71 also has handles 75 at its top 72 edges 72A and 72C. The case also has a clear label holder 77 on one of its sides to allow the placement of identifying information. Since the container or bag 71 is made of a flexible, pliable, rugged and durable material when it is not in use it can be folded up into a compact package 79 (Fig. 7A) or even rolled up into a cylindrical shape 81 (Fig. 7B) for storage or transport when not in use.

Fig. 8 provides a view of another feature of the container of the present invention. In the preferred embodiment the handles 75 are formed from a continuous strip 83 of durable strong fabric or other material and extends down one side 85 along the bottom 87 and up the other side 89. Strip 83 at each top edge 72A and 72C then ends to form handles 75A and 75B. This construction makes the handles very strong and durable as well as easy to grip and use. In the preferred embodiment continuous strip 83 would be a strap like material made of the same or similar material as container 71 and sewn to its sides 85 and 89 and its bottom 87.

In a variation of container 71 as an option pockets to accept rigid sheets as depicted in Fig. 2; however, container 71 can be made and used without this feature.

Container 71, as well as the other containers and strap in Figs. 1 to 6 because of their unique design and functionality can expedite the handling of baggage or luggage for common carriers in particular airlines. Additionally, they can expedite the handling of luggage and baggage in terminals, especially airline terminals. At check in and baggage claim areas in airline terminals the various versions of the present invention can facilitate the handling of baggage.

While the invention has been particularly shown and described with reference to a preferred embodiment thereof, it will be understood by those skilled in the art that various changes in form and detail may be made to it without departing from the spirit and scope of the invention.